

## Abstract

An apparatus and method affords, to authorized persons, access to one or more lockable areas of one or more gaming machines. Each area includes a door or switch and an associated electrically operable lock mechanism which controls access to the area either directly, or indirectly by controlling enablement of an associated manual key-operated latch assembly. Each machine has a local processor communicating with a central host computer and with lock processors for each of its lockable areas. Personnel identification and access authorization data is stored at the host computer. Part of the data may also be stored on personal data cards, respectively assigned to individual persons. A person seeking access inputs identification data at the machine, using a card reader or other data input device, and the host computer responds with signals to unlock lock mechanisms for areas which the identified person is authorized to access. Each machine monitors, and sends to the host, the states of all of its locks and doors. A manual override key, which can be disabled when power is on, can operate the lock mechanisms when power is off, and the apparatus provides an indication that the override key has been used.

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